

For immediate release  
February 28, 2005

## **PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS EROSION CONTROL AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT IN TIJUANA RIVER WATERSHED**

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) announces a public meeting of the USIBWC Citizens' Forum at 6:00 p.m. on March 10 at the Imperial Beach Community Room, 825 Imperial Beach Boulevard, Imperial Beach, California. The purpose of the forum is to promote the exchange of information between the USIBWC and the community about the Commission's projects and related issues in the area.

The meeting will feature a presentation about efforts to control erosion and stormwater flows in the Tijuana River Watershed at Los Laureles Canyon on the U.S.-Mexico border. The Tijuana River Watershed is binational, with two-thirds located on the Mexican side of the border. Los Laureles Canyon is one of five canyons that drain directly into the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR) in the United States. This internationally-recognized wetlands complex acts as a haven for endangered and threatened bird, fish, and plant species and was recently named as a Ramsar site, meaning that it is a wetland of international importance. Unfortunately, this fragile ecosystem is suffering impacts from sediment, trash, and pollution that cross the border at Los Laureles Canyon during the rainy season.

At the same time, the growing population in the Los Laureles Canyon area of Tijuana is causing impacts south of the border. Risks to public safety from mudslides and flash floods prompted the local government to begin channelizing the canyon's wash. The adjacent road is also being extended to increase access for emergency vehicles. Migration to the canyon is

causing unstable hillsides to be developed for housing, increasing deforestation and the chance of mudslides.

The municipal government in Tijuana has been very willing to discuss project alternatives that would reduce the impacts on TRNERR, especially Border Field State Park, where the roads are periodically covered with sediment and trash. This willingness opened the door for U.S. and Mexican agencies and non-profit organizations to collaborate on potential solutions. Discussing these efforts will be Anne McEnany of the International Community Foundation and Oscar Romo of the NOAA Coastal Training Program.

Additionally, USIBWC Environmental Engineer Carlos Peña will give an overview of Commission projects boundary-wide and explain how the agency obtains funds to implement works on the U.S.-Mexico border. The Commission operates major water storage, flood control, hydroelectric power, and sanitation projects in various border communities from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean.

A complete agenda appears below. The event is free and the public is encouraged to attend. Members of the public who would like more information about the meeting can call 619-662-7600 or e-mail [sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov](mailto:sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov).

For more information:

Sally Spener, 915-832-4175  
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**USIBWC CITIZENS' FORUM**  
**Thursday, March 10, 2005, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Imperial Beach Community Room**  
**825 Imperial Beach Blvd.**  
**Imperial Beach, CA 91932**

**Agenda**

- Welcome and Introductions - Carlos Peña, Co-Chair, USIBWC
- Erosion Control and Stormwater Management in Los Laureles Canyon - What are the next steps? – Anne McEnany, International Community Foundation and Oscar Romo, NOAA Coastal Training Program
- Overview of USIBWC Projects and Funding - Carlos Peña, Environmental Engineer, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time.

For more information, call 619-662-7600 or e-mail [sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov](mailto:sallyspener@ibwc.state.gov)